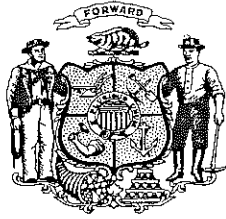


STATE OF WISCONSIN

SENATE CHAIR
MARK MILLER

317 East, State Capitol
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ASSEMBLY CHAIR
MARK POCAN

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JOINT COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

MEMORANDUM

To: Members
Joint Committee on Finance

From: Senator Mark Miller
Representative Mark Pocan

Date: July 27, 2010

Re: UW System Report on Undergraduate Course Drop Rates

Attached is a copy of the 2009 report on Undergraduate Course Drop Rates from the University of Wisconsin System, as directed per 1988 Board of Regents Resolution 5045 and the Joint Committee on Finance s. 13.10 action in September of 1988.

This report is being provided for your information only. No action by the Committee is required. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Attachments

MM:MP:jm



Office of the President

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RECEIVED
JUL 27 2010

BY: *J. Finance*

July 26, 2010

State Senator Mark Miller
Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Finance
PO Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

State Representative Mark Pocan
Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Finance
PO Box 8953
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Co-Chairs Miller and Pocan:

Accompanying this letter is a copy of the Report on 2009 Undergraduate Course Drop Rates, as required by the Legislature. We are pleased to announce that the Systemwide rate has declined significantly since 1989 from 5.3% to 3.1%. The current report marks the 20th consecutive year in which the UW System has achieved the goal of maintaining a drop rate of 5 percent or less.

Within the UW System, only the UW Colleges had annual course drop rates that exceeded the 5 percent threshold. The UW Colleges are pursuing aggressive intervention strategies, many of which occur early in the semester and should increase the likelihood that students will remain in classes. The UW Colleges will continue to work to reduce the course drop rate. However, due to their unique access mission, the UW Colleges may not be able to attain the same low drop rate as most UW four-year institutions.

UW System reports regularly on progress toward strategic goals as part of our annual accountability report. Student success in completing individual courses is one factor in our larger goal of increasing the number of college-educated Wisconsin residents. All UW institutions have policies in place that discourage students from registering for classes that they don't intend to complete. In that broader context, this annual report on Drop Rates provides little, if any, new information for policymakers or university leaders. With that in mind, I ask that the Committee consider eliminating the requirement for this report so that we may focus our limited resources on achieving strategic goals.

Please contact me if you have questions or would like to discuss this report.

Sincerely,

Kevin P. Reilly
Kevin P. Reilly
President

Attachment

c: UW Board of Regents
UW Chancellors
Rebecca Martin, Senior Vice President
Gail Bergman, Acting Director

REPORT ON 2009 UNDERGRADUATE COURSE DROP RATES

BACKGROUND

In September 1988, the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents passed Resolution 5045 in response to 1987-88 Wisconsin Act 27. Resolution 5045 directs the UW System Administration to:

1. Monitor course drop rates at all UW System institutions.
2. Require all UW System institutions to reduce or maintain course drop rates during any academic year at no more than five percent of the credit hours registered at the close of the tenth day of classes at the beginning of the fall and spring terms.
3. Direct all UW System institutions whose drop rates exceed five percent, effective in the fall of 1989, to develop and implement plans to reduce the drop rate to five percent. Such plans will be subject to the review and approval of UW System Administration.
4. Report to the Board of Regents annually on the drop rates of each institution.

The Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance passed a motion at its September 1988 Hearing, S13.10, which directed the UW System to report to the Committee annually, beginning in 1990, on:

1. Campuses where the undergraduate drop rate exceeded five percent.
2. The steps being taken to achieve a maximum five percent drop rate at these campuses.

Both the Board of Regents and the Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance require UW System Administration to report institutional and System drop rates. The objectives of both the Board of Regents and the Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance to reduce course drop rates below five percent have been consistently achieved over successive years since the 1990s.

REQUESTED ACTION

For information only; no action is required.

DISCUSSION

In this report, the course drop rate refers to completed credits as a proportion of enrolled credits. The UW System 2009 annual course drop rate was below the five percent threshold, at 3.1 percent (see Table 1). The UW System has achieved the intent of Resolution 5045 by reducing the number of systemwide dropped credits. In 1989, the systemwide drop rate was 5.3 percent. Over the years, the *Report on Undergraduate Course Drop Rates* has demonstrated a reduction in annual course drop rates to a level that has remained well below the mandated five percent threshold. This trend indicates that course drop rates within the UW System have reached a stable level which is within the guidelines established by both the Board of Regents and the Legislature.

Annual course drop rates among UW institutions were at or below the five percent threshold except for UW Colleges. With an annual drop rate in 2009 of 6.4 percent, the UW Colleges continues to take a variety of actions to reduce the drop rate. These include: (1) Careful advising, especially of under-prepared students, routine assessment of general education skills, and new faculty orientation on reaching under-prepared students who may be more likely to drop classes; (2) improvement of first-year initiatives including freshman orientation sessions focusing on adjusting to college-level courses, developing strong study skills and time management skills, and first-year seminars and curricular/co-curricular initiatives assisting in students' transition to college; and (3) promotion of strong instructor-to-student and student-to-student connections through learning communities, service-learning projects, community service projects, and faculty-student research endeavors.

These aggressive intervention strategies, many of which occur early in the semester, increase the likelihood that students will remain in classes. The UW Colleges will continue to work to reduce the course drop rate. However, given the access mission of the UW Colleges and the students they serve, a drop rate at or below five percent may not be attainable.

RELATED REGENTS POLICIES

Regent Policy 4-7: Add/Drop Policy for Courses (Resolution 5045 adopted 9/9/1988).

TABLE 1
Annual Course Drop Rates for Undergraduates by Institution

	1989	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
UW-Madison	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below
UW-Milwaukee	6.8%	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below
UW-Eau Claire	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below
UW-Green Bay	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below
UW-La Crosse	5.3%	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below
UW-Oshkosh	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	5.2%	5.2%	At/Below	At/Below
UW-Parkside	8.8%	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below
UW-Platteville	7.3%	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below
UW-River Falls	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below
UW-Stevens Point	5.5%	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below
UW-Stout	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below
UW-Superior	6.0%	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below
UW-Whitewater	7.2%	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below	At/Below
UW Colleges	6.2%	6.5%	6.2%	6.7%	6.9%	6.9%	6.4%

System Total

	1989	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
UW System	5.3%	3.2%	3.5%	3.6%	3.6%	3.3%	3.1%